



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Public Library

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Library to Host Event with Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, Author of “Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy”**

**SAN DIEGO** – The City of San Diego Public Library and the Italian Studies Department at the University of California, San Diego will host an author talk by [Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum](#) on “Black Madonnas: Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy” on Wednesday, Oct. 13, at 6:30 p.m. in the third floor auditorium of the Central Library, located at 820 E St. The talk is in conjunction with the Italian American Devotion to the Black Madonna exhibit, curated by the Queen College’s Calandra Institute. This event is FREE to the public.

“Black Madonnas” is a prize-winning, deeply researched, historical study demonstrating ancient goddess origins of Black Madonnas, subversive peasant customs and rituals surrounding images of black madonnas, and their contemporary transformative cultural and political implications. It has been acclaimed by scholars ranging from Harvey Cox of the Harvard Divinity School to feminist scholar Donna Haraway, poets, multicultural historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural theorists.

[Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum](#), Ph.D., is a multicultural historian whose “Liberazione della Donna: Feminism in Italy” won an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1987. In October 1998, Lucia Birnbaum received the prestigious Valitutti Award for non-fiction for “Black Madonnas.” Dr. Birnbaum was inducted, in 1996, into the African American International Multicultural Educators Hall of Fame. In May 2002, Lucia was awarded Serpentina’s Enheduanna Award for Excellence in Women-Centered Literature.

Lucia’s professional work has developed from that of a traditional historian to the continually

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widening methodologies of a feminist cultural scholar concerned with submerged beliefs. Intercultural, as well as interdisciplinary, she has studied everyday and celebratory rituals, saints' stories, the lives of her Sicilian grandmothers/godmothers, and other dark others, including Canaanites, Moors, Jews, heretics, and witches. Adopting comparative history, she has juxtaposed European and U. S. history and beliefs of the Italian women's movement with beliefs of women of the world.

Lucia holds a doctorate in European and U.S. history from the University of California at Berkeley.

This lecture is part of the five-month program "Stories of Faith: Religion and Diversity in San Diego," funded by the California Council for the Humanities. There are many Stories of Faith programs sponsored by the Library from September 2004 through January 2005. For more information, visit the Library on the City's Web site at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/>

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